

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of delivering security services, comprising:  
connecting a plurality of processors in a ring configuration within a first processing system;  
establishing a secure connection between a second processing system and the ~~processors in the ring configuration~~ first processing system across an internet protocol (IP) connection ~~to a second processing system~~ to form a tunnel; and  
routing messages from the ~~first~~ second processing system ~~to~~ via the ~~second~~ first processing system, wherein routing includes providing application layer services for a customer ~~on a~~ using at least one processor selected from the plurality of processors in the first processing system's ring configuration.
2. ( Original ) The method of claim 1 , wherein, to support a communications network, the plurality of processors includes one or more control processors, one or more access processors, and one or more processing processors.
3. ( Original ) The method of claim 2, wherein for each of a plurality of customers, a virtual router is formed in the first processing system and is operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.
4. ( Original ) The method of claim 2, wherein for each of a plurality of customers, a virtual private network is formed using a virtual router formed in the first processing system and operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.
5. ( Original ) The method of claim 2, wherein the connecting a plurality of processors in the ring configuration includes forming dual counter rotating ring connections, each connecting to each of the plurality of processors.

6. (Currently Amended) A system of delivering security services, comprising:  
a plurality of processors in a ring configuration within a first processing system;  
means for establishing a secure connection between the ~~processors in the ring configuration~~ first processing system across an internet protocol (IP) connection to a second processing system to form a tunnel; and for providing both router services and application layer services via one or more processors of the first processing system for a customer using the ~~plurality of processors in the ring configuration and using the second processing system.~~
7. ( Original ) The system of claim 6, wherein, to support a communications network, the plurality of processors includes one or more control processors, one or more access processors, and one or more processing processors.
8. ( Original ) The system of claim 7, wherein for each of a plurality of customers, a virtual router is formed in the first processing system and is operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.
9. ( Original ) The system of claim 7, wherein for each of a plurality of customers, a virtual private network is formed using a virtual router formed in the first processing system and operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.
10. ( Original ) The system of claim 7, wherein the plurality of processors in the ring configuration includes dual counter rotating ring connections, each connecting to each of the plurality of processors.
11. (Currently Amended) A system of delivering security services, comprising:  
a plurality of processors within a first processing system connected in a ring configuration; and  
a tunnel formed using a secure connection between the ~~processors in the ring~~

~~configuration~~ first processing system across an internet protocol (IP) connection to a second processing system, wherein both router services and application layer services are provided to the second processing system via ~~for a customer using one or more processors of the first processing system~~ the plurality of processors in the ring configuration and using the second processing system.

12. ( Original ) The system of claim 11, wherein, to support a communications network, the plurality of processors includes one or more control processors, one or more access processors, and one or more processing processors.

13. ( Original ) The system of claim 11, wherein for each of a plurality of customers, a virtual router is formed in the first processing system and is operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.

14. ( Original ) The system of claim 11, wherein for each of plurality of customers, a virtual private network is formed using a virtual router formed in the first processing system and operably connected to a virtual router formed in the second system.

15. ( Original ) The system of claim 11, wherein the plurality of processors in the ring configuration includes dual counter rotating connections, each connecting to each of the plurality of processors.

16. ( Original ) The system claim 11, further comprising:  
a services management system that provides changeable provisioning of processor capacity among a plurality of customers.

17. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 11, further comprising:  
a services management system that provides application layer firewall protection for each of a plurality of customers.

18. ( Original ) The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a services management system that provides provisioning of processor capacity among a plurality of customers, wherein each customer's resources are isolated from those of all the other customers.